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ABSTRACT

This book adopts a questioning approach to studying history in which students become biographers who read, discuss, research, and write books about their subjects, providing their own original interpretations of the facts. By digging into the past and reflecting on what they have learned, students get involved in the process and are eager to do it again and again. And rather than merely memorizing facts, students engage in historical sense-making using the biography as an entryway into the larger issues of history. Each chapter in the book deals with a new way of questioning and dialoguing with biographies. Chapters are: (1) "A Questioning Approach to Biography: Putting Interpretation in the Forefront"; (2) "'What If?' History"; (3) "Powerful Pairs, Triplets, Quads, and More: Looking at Historical Interpretation"; (4) "Thinking with Visible Authors"; (5) "Sidebars, Captions, Timelines, and Authors' Notes"; and (6) "Simple Questions without Simple Answers." For each strategy, the book provides a rationale based on existing research, a procedure to follow when using that approach in the classroom, and samples of student work. Plentiful art work throughout the book, an extensive reference section, and lists of recommended biographies, including picture books and full-length works, will help teachers with using biographies in their classrooms. (BT)

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